



The Old Ironsides Report

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1AD Engineers Clean Up UN Site in Baghdad

**Story and Photo by Spc. Ryan Smith
372nd MPAD**

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Responding to disasters and emergencies in their home states is one of the most important missions the Army National Guard has for its units. From natural disasters such as floods and tornadoes to destruction caused by terrorist attacks, the Army National Guard is ready to assist.

The call came for a Missouri Army National Guard unit assigned to the 1st Armored Division in Iraq recently—not to respond to a stateside disaster, but to help when the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad was bombed.

The 203rd Engineer Battalion, a Missouri Army National Guard unit headquartered in Joplin, Mo., arrived on the site in Baghdad the morning after the bombing.

“We came in first to see if we could find survivors,” said Capt. Jerry McDaniel, commander of Headquarters and Support Company, 203rd Engineer Battalion.

Soldiers from the unit worked concurrently to recover the remains of the casualties and remove debris from the site, he said.

The soldiers feel a sense of duty about helping in situations like these, he said. “They feel like they’re doing a real mission, doing something positive.”

When a tornado hit Pierce City, Mo., before the unit deployed to the Middle East, many soldiers from the 203rd volunteered to go on leave to assist with the cleanup there. “A lot of the soldiers wanted to go to their hometown to help clean up,” McDaniel said.

Many of the soldiers in the unit are civilian firefighters or rescue personnel when they’re not on active duty. These soldiers took the lead in the initial stages of the unit’s work at the UN site, McDaniel said.

Though the work is slow because the soldiers must defer to forensics teams, there is a sense of accomplishment among the engineers.

“We’re doing what we’re here (in Iraq) for,” said Spc. Derrik Long, a heavy-equipment operator for Headquarters and Support Company, 203rd Engineer Battalion. “It feels like we’ve done something here for a good reason.”

Elements from all the companies in the battalion were at the site working, McDaniel said. “We all rolled up our sleeves and got to work.”



Soldiers from the 203rd Engineer Battalion, an Army National Guard unit from Joplin, Mo., get water before heading to work in the intense heat at the site of the bombing at the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad.

A Smart Tip From 1AD Safety

Transportation of Personnel in Cargo Trucks

- **The number of passengers must not exceed the number that can be seated.**
- **Trucks used to transport personnel must be equipped with seating securely anchored, have a rear endgate, a guardrail, and a safety strap.**
- **Passengers will not stand in cargo area and will keep their arms or legs inside the truck body.**
- **Personnel will load and unload from the rear and use steps to dismount.**
- **Vehicles transporting personnel will not be the last vehicle in a convoy.**

NEWS

U.S. Seeks Larger Role for U.N. in Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) - The United States is circulating a proposed resolution to assign a larger role to the United Nations in peacemaking in Iraq and to outline a "political horizon" for the country's transition to a constitutional democracy, Secretary of State Colin Powell said Wednesday. At a hastily arranged news conference, Powell said peacekeeping troops, most of which are supplied by the United States, would be placed under a unified command with U.S. commanders in charge.

No Schwarzenegger in Calif. Recall Debate

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) - As the state's most popular politician came to the defense of Gov. Gray Davis, the leading candidates to replace him - minus Arnold Schwarzenegger - prepared to take each other on in the recall election's first scheduled debate. Schwarzenegger planned to skip Wednesday's debate and instead deliver a speech to supporters and students at California State University in Long Beach.

Woman Gets 50 to Life in Child Drowning

TROY, N.Y. (AP) - A mother diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic was sentenced to the maximum 50 years to life in prison Wednesday for drowning her 4-year-old son in a bathtub last year and attempting to kill her other son. Christine Wilhelm, 39, was convicted of murder last month in the drowning death of young Luke. She was also found guilty of attempted murder for trying to drown Peter, then 5, who escaped her grasp.

Cleaning a Toilet Is Better Than Spam

Frustrated by clogged inboxes, e-mail users think spam purveyors ought to face some sort of punishment, according to a survey of nearly 28,000 people. The irritation has reached such a level that more than three out of four people said it was less aggravating to clean a toilet than to wade through the junk messages in their e-mail.

Chaplain's thought for the day: ***Keep on Rowing***

I once saw a cartoon depicting a group of shackled prisoners standing on a dock, waiting for a Roman galley that was pulling into port. "That's a great ship," one mused. "I wonder what makes it go?" The sketch reminded me of the words of the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 4:1. Paul uses an unusual Greek word for servants. Literally, it means "under-rowers," and in that day it referred to the slaves that pulled the oars in Roman warships. What a striking word picture! The great apostle, who could have asserted his authority, considered himself a mere galley slave in the hold of the ship with the rest of God's people, pulling on an oar with everyone else. This is different from our usual concept of leadership. The direction in which any organization or nation goes, the speed with which it develops is God's prerogative. Our task, no matter what our position or work, is to keep our eyes on God and to keep on rowing.

—David Roper

SPORTS

Runner Escapes Suspension, May Lose Gold

PARIS (AP) - U.S. sprinter Kelli White will not be suspended from track meets for taking a stimulant but still could be stripped of the two gold medals she won at the World Championships. The IAAF will review White's medical records Monday and decide whether she committed a doping offense, Istvan Gyulai, general secretary of track and field's governing body, told The Associated Press from Monaco on Wednesday.

Oddly Enough...

Smelly Employee Fuels Hygiene Policy

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (AP) -- City officials say one smelly employee is responsible for a new policy that requires all city employees to smell nice when reporting for work. The Murfreesboro City Council adopted the good hygiene policy Thursday: "No employee shall have an odor generally offensive to others when reporting to work. An offensive body odor may result from a lack of good hygiene, from an excessive application of a fragrant aftershave or cologne or from other cause." City attorney Susan McGannon said the problem had never come up in the 11 years she has worked for the city. But one employee, who was not named, has a problem with hygiene despite repeated counseling. "They were stymied," McGannon said. "This (amendment) further details the city's authority." The definition of body odor was left intentionally vague. City Councilman Toby Gilley said the standard would be the same one a U.S. Supreme Court justice used to identify pornography. "We'll know it when we see it," Gilley said. "We'll know it when we smell it." Murfreesboro is about 30 miles southeast of Nashville.

On This Day in History ***September 4th 1945***

On this day in 1945, 2,200 Japanese soldiers finally lay down their arms—days after their government had already formally capitulated. In December of 1941, the Japanese invaded in force, taking the island from American hands, losing 820 men, while the United States lost 120. The United States decided not to retake the island but to cut off the Japanese occupiers from reinforcement, which would mean they would eventually starve. The Japanese garrison sat on Wake Island for two years, suffering the occasional U.S. bombing raid, but no land invasion. In that time, 1,300 Japanese soldiers died from starvation, and 600 from the American air attacks. Two days after the formal Japanese surrender onboard the USS Missouri, Sakaibara capitulated to American forces, which finally landed on the island.